



Department of Justice

**Acting United States Attorney Stan B. Harris
Southern District of Mississippi**

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MISSISSIPPI WOMAN SENTENCED FOR KATRINA FRAUD

GULFPORT, Miss - Bonnie M. Sonnier, formerly of Biloxi, Mississippi, pled guilty today and was sentenced to 3 years probation for filing a false claim with the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), Acting U.S. Attorney Stan Harris announced. She was also ordered to perform 50 hours of community service and to pay restitution to FEMA in the amount of \$8,055.86 and to the American Red Cross in the amount of \$360.

In September, 2005, the United States Department of Justice, created the national Hurricane Katrina Fraud Task Force, designed to deter, investigate and prosecute disaster-related federal crimes such as charity fraud, identity theft, procurement fraud and insurance fraud. The Hurricane Katrina Fraud Task Force - chaired by Acting Assistant Attorney General for the Criminal Division, Rita M. Glavin, includes members from the Department of Homeland Security, FBI, the Federal Trade Commission, the Department of Labor Office of Inspector General, the Postal Inspector's Office and the Executive Office of United States Attorneys, among others.

Pursuant to the Justice Department initiative, a local Katrina Fraud Task Force, consisting of over 20 Federal and State law enforcement agencies, was formed in the Southern District of Mississippi to pursue and prosecute individuals who engage in fraud associated with the hurricanes. The Mississippi State Auditor Fraud Prevention and Protection Unit investigates allegations of fraud in the Homeowner Grant Program as part of the local task force.

If anyone has information concerning possible fraud being committed during the post-Katrina recovery effort, please call either the DHS-OIG Fraud Hotline at 1-866-720-5721 or the FBI Fraud Hotline at 1-800-225-5324.

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